**Case Study 7 - Moray Council**

**SENIOR PHASE CASE STUDY**

1. **Background**

Curriculum for Excellence, published in November 2004, set out a 3‑18 curriculum which focused on achieving clearly defined, rounded outcomes for children and young people. Its associated rationale required schools to devise a curriculum designed to “enable all children to develop capacities as successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors and one which would allow young people to achieve and develop deeper understanding in their learning.

The changes required present a significant challenge to our schools. This Case Study outlines the approach taken by Moray Council to support its schools in meeting that challenge.

1. **Meeting the Challenge**

As a small local authority, particularly at this time of financial difficulty, our ability to support schools in significant transformation was and remains constrained. Accordingly, it was imperative that we utilised and shared the experience and expertise that existed across the eight schools in Moray. Our mechanism for this was to organise a series of curriculum seminars, these to be attended by four members of staff from each of our secondary schools. Over the course of the seminars, each school was given the opportunity to present to and have challenged by colleagues, their emerging rationale on curriculum design.

The Curriculum Seminars were designed to:

* Provide opportunities for staff in Moray to participate in the activities and discussions used at the National “Testing the Framework” events
* Allow Head Teachers, Deputes and Principal teachers from schools across Moray to meet, discuss and share ideas with each other
* Draw on the knowledge and expertise of LTS, Scottish Government and SQA personnel as well as input from schools in other authorities
* Focus thinking on curriculum design and associated implementation issues

The authority, recognising that we required significant advice and input from outwith the authority, invited many external contributors to present at the above seminars. The views expressed and the way forward outlined in this Case Study represents Moray’s position at this time. In reaching those views, however, we would wish to acknowledge the valuable external input at our seminars, the support we received from LTS, the ideas gleaned from materials other schools and authorities were willing to share with us.

1. **The Junior Phase – Providing a Broad General Education**

Before schools can prepare for the senior phase, they must first devise their junior phase provision. Provision in the junior phase must take account of and build on experiences from associated Primary schools and also provide a strong platform for learning in the senior phase and for success in the qualifications that await young people there. Attainment in the senior phase will be enhanced by the broader knowledge and skills base, the deep learning and the higher order thinking skills developed in the Broad General Education provided in S1 – S3.

The first challenge facing schools, therefore, was the design of a broad general education in S1 – S3 that would:

* adhere to the seven Design Principles of CfE;
* be based on the Experiences and Outcomes provided for each Curriculum Area;
* plan for the effective development of literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing ensuring consistency of practice across the school;
* be subject to a process of on-going self-evaluation.

Accordingly, this challenge was the particular focus of the four seminars held in Session 2009 – 10. The involvement at these seminars of Head Teachers, Deputes and Principal Teachers ensured a wider range of perspectives were brought to bear on the matters discussed and issues raised at the seminars.

A record of the views that emerged and the decisions taken by Moray on how schools could incorporate the seven principles of curriculum design and use the Experiences and Outcomes at Level 3 and 4 to deliver the broad general education required are presented in the full Case Study in the CD associated with this publication. Electronic copies of a set of appendices and support materials devised in Moray to assist schools in both the design and subsequent implementation of their design are also available on the Wikispace referred to earlier in this document. Information on the Appendices and Support materials available will be given in Section 5.

Whilst the S1 – S3 curriculum was the focus of the above events, it was acknowledged that any projected changes in S1 - S3 would necessarily impinge on what schools could subsequently deliver in the senior phase. Accordingly, a number of senior phase issues arose during the course of the early seminars as did issues relating to transition between the primary and secondary sectors. In relation to the senior phase, the concept of an S4 – S6 design template emerged and received considerable support.

Following the above seminars, Moray schools were asked to submit their S1 – S3 curriculum design to the Authority. All submissions were to be regarded as works in progress as it was anticipated that thinking would continue to develop and that on-going evaluation and changes in circumstance would be likely to lead to subsequent changes being made.

1. **The Senior Phase**

Prior to committing to an S1 – S3 curriculum design, schools wanted some consideration to be given as to what would be required in the senior phase and reassurance that their intended design could be implemented. Accordingly, a number of senior phase events were organised in Session 2010 – 11. In addition, a small group was established to investigate the timetabling issues related to the implementations of revised S1 – S3 curriculum designs and the anticipated move to an S4- S6 template (See Section 5).

The purpose of the above events was to assist school staff in formulating initial thoughts on the design of the senior phase curriculum. As for previous seminars, schools were asked to send a team of four or five staff. Given the strong emphasis of partnership working in the senior phase, a range of stakeholders and partners such as CLD staff, FE Colleges, Skills Development Scotland were also invited to be involved.

Questions raised and addressed by staff at these seminars included:

1. How many courses should be provided for S4 – S6 pupils and need there be a common number of courses across all secondary schools in Moray?
2. In 2013-14, New National Qualifications will only be available at National 4 and 5. Should we consider a standalone S4 in 2013 -14?
3. Need English and Mathematics continue to be compulsory in S4? What other constraints affect any intended curriculum design?
4. What implications are there for schools arising from the phased introduction of the new national qualifications and “dual running”?
5. How can we maintain/enhance the breadth of provision in the senior phase making best use of limited resources, consortium arrangements and partnership opportunities?

A record of the views expressed and the current position taken by Moray on these is given in the full Case Study on the CD. Following the seminars, Moray’s intended way forward for the senior phase was finalised and is documented below.

* All Moray schools have been asked to prepare for an S4 – S6 template as from Session 2013 – 14. The main rationale for this was to widen the range of options that schools could make available to its young people in the senior phase. Options currently not viable in S4 or S5/6 might be viable across S4 – S6 and a common template will facilitate partnership working and consortium arrangements.
* Schools will continue to be supported in developing the Broad General Education required up to age 15. Work will be undertaken to support schools on this and schools will be asked to evaluate the impact of their evolving design on attainment and achievement in their schools.
* Given the above, schools will be asked to finalise plans for their senior phase provision. Currently, schools will be asked to deliver generally five qualifications in the Senior Phase (with a potential for six in S4). Particular circumstances may lead to individual pupils sitting more or less. Partnership provision in the senior phase will be evaluated and will be evolved and developed to meet required needs.
* Moray will prepare for possible alternative approaches to the delivery of Advanced Higher and minority Higher courses in an attempt to ensure equity of provision across the authority. This work along with increasing partnership activity with local employers, agencies and Colleges should inform and enhance provision in the Senior Phase.
* All Moray secondary schools operate a 30 period week. The Authority will consult on a common school day designed to facilitate timetabling convergence and the provision of blended learning and partnership working in the Senior Phase.
* Staff will participate in assessment and moderation activities designed to lead to a greater shared understanding of “levels”. Such provision will also provide a valuable CPD opportunity which will share and promote good practice in learning and teaching.
* Moray is attempting to establish an authority baseline against the seven HMIe characteristics for CfE. A draft rubric has been developed for this purpose and is being trialed this term.

1. **Appendices, Support Material and Implementing School Designs,**

The following appendices are available on the Wikispace associated with this document.

Appendices 1 – 3

In conjunction with the curriculum seminars described earlier, a small working group involving senior managers and school timetablers from three of Moray’s schools was established with the remit to identify the curricular and timetabling issues likely to be faced by schools in implementing their revised curriculum designs in S1 – S3 and in addressing senior phase issues.

Appendices 1 - 3 outline the draft curriculum designs of the three schools involved. Each school has also supplied their completed Timetabling Spreadsheet used to model and cost their proposed designs thus applying in a real context the Spreadsheet which is included as Appendix 5.

Appendix 4 – The Elgin High Experiences and Outcomes Spreadsheets

This appendix contains the Elgin High Experiences and Outcomes Spreadsheet. These spreadsheets enable schools to plan and demonstrate their broad general education provision, identify any gaps and overlap and will provide an overview of a school’s S1 – S3 provision. It is important to stress that the system is not merely an audit tool, its strength lying in the dialogue and debate its use promotes amongst staff using it. It assists staff in planning, ordering and progression (of Es and Os within a level and also from Level 3 to Level 4) and identifies where and when learning occurs thereby encouraging links between departments.

Appendix 5 – The Moray High Timetabling Spreadsheet for Modeling and Costing

In timetabling terms, schools must clearly “cost” their envisaged curriculum design for Session 2013 – 14. Schools must also be sure, however, that they can staff the journey to get there. This spreadsheet allows schools to both cost and model their designs on a year by year basis thus ensuring that they can be implemented. Parameters can be changed so that schools can model their year by year implementation and once established, their model can be adapted to future changes of circumstance such as staffing cuts.

1. **Conclusion**

This Case Study documents a process of consultation that began essentially in Session 2009 – 10 and is continuing as this Case Study is being written. It involved four or five staff coming from each of our schools working together, sharing ideas and discussing the myriad of issues thrown up by Curriculum for Excellence.

The presence of class and principal teachers at the seminars was designed to involve staff at all levels, promote a wide ranging debate and to support strategic planning in schools in the challenging task of devising revised curriculum designs. Their presence also ensured that learning and teaching was at the forefront of our thoughts and that any structural change envisaged should be devised with improved learning and teaching provision in mind.

The process required schools to share their evolving thinking with colleagues in other schools. At one particular seminar, for example, a carousel activity required each school to present its curriculum design to colleagues from other schools in a “support and challenge” environment. Staff delegates from the same school were allocated to different tables with two of them asked to present their school’s curriculum design to colleagues. Over the course of the meeting, this enabled each school to hear about, learn from and challenge the designs of every other school in Moray. Concerns and uncertainties remain, however, both locally and nationally. Given the transformation that CfE is designed to bring, this is to be expected and should not be allowed to detract from the progress and good work that is being made by staff in schools.

Moray schools are beginning to develop a clear curricular vision. Their challenge now is to develop and put in place the “clear plan” required to get them from “A to B”. The challenge to the Authority is how to support their schools in the implementation of their plans and the Authority’s current intentions in this regard have been outlined earlier.